

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to LOC Number 47617 for the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS)

From: David C. Johnson

Date: May 5, 2023

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

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LOC Number 47617 is hereby amended as follows:

1. LOC, Item 1.1 is being modified to read:

Beginning with Item 4 and through Item ~~47.2~~16.2, label and respond to each outline point as it is labeled in the LOC.

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: Would ITS consider a co-Managed Private Cloud where ITS could either own the equipment or someone else does and co-manages with service and supports the equipment?

Response: No.

Question 2: Would ITS consider any option of co-managing the equipment?

Response: No.

Question 3: Does the physical equipment need to be housed at ITS 3771 Eastwood Drive or could it be housed at a datacenter within Mississippi?

Response: Physical equipment must be housed in the two locations referenced in Item 5.8 of LOC Number 47617.

Question 4: Can the Physical equipment be housed at a Datacenter connected to Mississippi in a surrounding state such as Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, or Louisiana as long as ITS has management ability available for them?

Response: **Physical equipment must be housed in the two locations referenced in Item 5.8 of LOC Number 47617.**

Question 5: In section 1.1 it states the instruction run through section 17.2 but this ends at 16.2, is there one more section that is missing?

Response: **Item 1.1 has been modified. See Amendment 1 above.**

Question 6: In section 5.4 it states ITS reserves the right to award this to multiple vendors if need be. In section 5.15 it states ITS plans to award this to one single vendor, which one is it?

Response: **ITS' operational preference is to award this LOC to one single vendor; however, ITS can award to multiple vendors if needed.**

Question 7: Is this going to be deployed as a cluster?

Response: **Yes. The nodes will be deployed as two (2) clusters of eight (8) nodes each.**

Question 8: Will there be both a production and DR deployment, meaning 16 nodes in each location initially or will it be 8 nodes in each location initially?

Response: **There will be eight (8) nodes each housed in the two locations referenced in Item 5.8 of LOC Number 47617.**

Question 9: What networking equipment will this used to connect to these nodes?

Response: **ITS operates a Cisco ACI switching infrastructure that connects both data centers. In particular, the servers will connect to Cisco Nexus 9348GC-FXP and Cisco Nexus C93180YC switches. As mentioned in Attachment E, proposed adapters must be compatible with a Cisco SFP-H25G-CU3M=25GBASE-CU SFP28 Cable.**

Question 10: Who will be performing the deployment of the equipment, operating system, and software?

Response: **ITS will perform the deployment of the equipment, operating system, and software.**

Question 11: What type of racks will be used, and are there any limitations regarding power or cooling that needs to be considered?

Response: **Racks are standard 19" 42U size. Actual dimensions are 23.6 inches wide, 47.2 inches deep, and 78.3 inches tall. There are no limitations regarding power or cooling as long as the equipment proposed complies to the hardware specifications provided in Attachment E.**

Question 12: Do we need to include any post-deployment professional services like data migration or knowledge transfer?

Response: No.

Question 13: Can ITS disclose what Hypervisor/Hyperconverged software they are planning to run on these nodes?

Response: **VMWare will be used to run the nodes. As stated in Attachment E, all host server components and alternative components must be VMWare HCL Compliant.**

Question 14: Is a newer generation processor allowed versus just a better processor within the same generation?

Response: Yes.

Question 15: Can the co-processing disaster recovery site be dedicated instances in a public cloud provider?

Response: No.

Question 16: Is St of MS open to a single-tenant VMWare Solution on a Public Cloud?

Response: No.

Question 17: What value does ITS assign to data center floorspace?

Response: **ITS has secured sufficient floorspace for the requested equipment, so the cost of floorspace will not be used in the calculation for awarding LOC Number 47617.**

Question 18: What electricity rate is ITS charged?

Response: **This value is immaterial to this procurement as the electricity rate will not be used in the evaluation of responses received for purposes of awarding a contract under LOC Number 47617.**

Question 19: Is the 4-year growth factored into the hardware requirement?

Response: **Yes, 4 year growth is factored for the existing workloads based on historical usage.**

Question 20: What is the desired Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO) for ITS's cloud?

Response: **This information is not required for the current hardware solicitation. The two sites will be redundant and highly available. RTOs and RPOs are determined per workload.**

Question 21: What percentage of the applications require VMWare as the hypervisor? Are applications compatible with other hypervisors? Are the applications available to run on Linux?

Response: **VMWare will be used as the only hypervisor for this environment so compatibility of applications with other hypervisors is immaterial. There are both Windows and Linux based workloads currently running in the environment.**

Question 22: Would the applications be modernized in the next 4 years to run in containers?

Response: **This information is immaterial for the current hardware solicitation. The individual agencies that own the workloads will determine any modernization projects.**

Question 23: What were the infrastructure requirements that resulted from the best fit analysis for all the applications that will be running in this environment?

Response: **The requested hardware specifications provided in this solicitation resulted from a conservative analysis based on existing workloads.**

Question 24: Is the agency wanting to use DELL VxRail or VSAN Ready nodes?

Response: **The State wants individual servers and not an integrated solution. Vendors must meet minimum specifications as listed in Attachment E.**

Question 25: What are the agency's intentions in respect to these nodes?

Response: **The nodes will be used to create a fully redundant, VMWare-based state-owned and managed private cloud infrastructure.**

Question 26: Does the agency have the licenses for both VSAN and vSphere or do they need us to quote them? If so, could the agency please advise on the edition needed? The Excel references vSphere but not the edition. (*Standard or Enterprise Plus*), same for VSAN, there are multiple editions of VSAN. (*Standard, Advanced, Enterprise, Enterprise Plus*) Each option has different entitlements it unlocks. <https://www.vmware.com/content/dam/digitalmarketing/vmware/en/pdf/products/vsan/vmware-vsan-licensing-guide.pdf>

Response: **ITS currently owns partial licensing for the environment. The remaining licenses needed will be procured separately. We do not require pricing for the Hypervisor software to be included in response to this solicitation.**

Question 27: Does the agency have a usable capacity they are aiming for?

Response: **The hardware specifications provided in Attachment E are inclusive of the overall current capacity needs of the environment.**

Question 28: How many users will be accessing the infrastructure?

Response: **This information is immaterial for the current hardware solicitation.**

Question 29: Can we have an all-encompassing application list?

Response: No.

Question 30: What are the typical user computer requirements: CPU, RAM, Storage?

Response: The typical user computer requirements vary based on individual workload.

Question 31: Would they be willing to entertain a completely hosted model?

Response: No.

Question 32: The software for the Private Cloud environment will be competitively procured via the NASPO Software Value Added Reseller Cooperative. Is this software procurement going to be a separate bid?

- a. Is this software procurement going to be a separate bid?
- b. Will this include both VMWare and Veeam Licensing?

Response: Software for the Private Cloud environment will be separately procured and will include the acquisition of VMWare and Veeam licensing.

Question 33: The existing vendor-managed Hybrid Cloud environment has experienced multiple outages with significant downtime over the past 16 months?

- a. What has been the cause of the outages?
- b. How many outages have there been?
- c. What was the average time of the outage?

Response: This information requested is immaterial for responding to this LOC.

Question 34: What level of Support is required for the Hardware included in this RFP

- a. Manufacturer support
- b. Hardware support
- c. Software support
- d. Real Time Monitoring
- e. Ongoing Management
 - i. Software patches
 - ii. Moves, Adds, and Changes

Response: Please see the minimum requirements for manufacturer hardware support in Item 9.1 of LOC Number 47617.

Question 35: What if any level of Implementation Services are required?

- a. Physical install (rack and stack)
- b. Basic Implementation
- c. Advanced Configuration
- d. Migration Services

Response: No implementation services are being requested under this LOC.

LOC responses are due May 12, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Khelli Reed at 601-432-8194 or via email at Khelli.Reed@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 47617